

NCA
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AL GRIGIS

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ASEAN IN WASHINGTON

ANNCR:

FOREIGN AND ECONOMIC MINISTERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS -- ASEAN -- WILL MEET IN WASHINGTON FOR TWO DAYS NEXT WEEK (AUGUST 3-4) WITH SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE AND OTHER AMERICAN OFFICIALS AS WELL AS BUSINESSMEN FOR A SECOND MAJOR ROUND OF ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS. VOA'S AL GRIGIS REVIEWS SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF ASEAN'S RECENT ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

VOICE:

IN 1967, THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS -- INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE AND THAILAND -- BANDED TOGETHER TO FURTHER WHAT THEY DESCRIBED AS THEIR ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL INTERESTS. SINCE THEN THEIR GOAL HAS BEEN TO COORDINATE MATTERS OF MUTUAL CONCERN AMONG THEMSELVES AND TO DEAL WITH OTHER NATIONS BOTH AS A GROUP AND AS INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES. TOWARD THIS END, THEY HAVE CONDUCTED ECONOMIC DIALOGUES ON AN INTERNATIONAL SCALE AS WELL AS ON A COUNTRY-TO-COUNTRY BASIS.

LAST MAY IN MANILA, THE FIVE MEMBER COUNTRIES HELD THEIR FIRST ANNUAL TRADE FAIR AIMED AT INTERESTING THE PRIVATE SECTORS OF OTHER COUNTRIES AS WELL AS THEIR OWN TO DEVELOP GREATER TRADE WITHIN THE REGION AND TO STIMULATE INVESTMENTS FROM IN AND OUT OF THE ASEAN REGION.

THEN IN JUNE, THE ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS COMPLETED THEIR 11TH ANNUAL SESSION WITH A REASSESSMENT OF THEIR TRADE AND OTHER RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD. AMONG THE MORE CONCRETE CONCERNS DISCUSSED WERE WHAT THEY DESCRIBED

AS THE ALARMING INDOCHINA REFUGEE PROBLEM, HOSTILITIES ON THE CAMBODIAN BORDERS, THE FEAR OF EUROPEAN TRADE PROTECTIONISM, THE INTRA-ASEAN PREFERENTIAL TRADING AGREEMENT, AND THE UPCOMING DIALOGUE TO BE HELD AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL HERE IN WASHINGTON.

THEIR FINAL COMMUNIQUE RESTATED THEIR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES AND UNDERLINED THAT THE REGION SHOULD ADHERE TO ITS CONCEPT OF BEING A ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY, AND THAT THE POWERFUL NATIONS OF THE WORLD SHOULD RECOGNIZE THIS, AS SHOULD ASEAN'S COMMUNIST INDOCHINESE NEIGHBORS.

FOLLOWING THAT MEETING, ASEAN PROPOSED TO JAPAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER A PROCEDURE, PRACTICED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, WHICH PROVIDES INTEREST-FREE LOANS WHENEVER A DEVELOPING COUNTRY'S IMPORT INCOME FALLS BELOW A CERTAIN LEVEL. ON THE SAME WEEKEND, THE PRIME MINISTERS OF AUSTRALIA, SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA MET IN KUALA LUMPUR FOR TALKS CENTERING ON TRADE AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, INCLUDING THE MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS TO BE LATER DISCUSSED IN GENEVA.

IN BRUSSELS THIS MONTH, (JULY), AMBASSADORS OF ASEAN AND SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WORKED TOGETHER IN WHAT THEY CALLED A FIRST STEP IN A PROCESS OF UPGRADING THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS. OUT OF THAT MEETING ALSO CAME THE SCHEDULE FOR A MEETING AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL IN BRUSSELS NEXT NOVEMBER. A CONFERENCE WHICH BROUGHT TOGETHER FIVE HUNDRED EUROPEAN AND ASEAN BUSINESSMEN AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS LAST YEAR IS TO BE FOLLOWED BY A SIMILAR EVENT IN JAKARTA IN FEBRUARY 1979.

HERE IN WASHINGTON, OFFICIALS IN THE U.S. DELEGATION TO BE LED BY SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE SAY THEY EXPECT THE AUGUST 3-4 CONSULTATIONS TO DEVELOP A BOARDER FRAMEWORK OF

AMERICAN-ASEAN COOPERATION IN AREAS OF TRADE, INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT. OTHER AREAS OF CONCERN INCLUDE ENERGY RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, BUSINESS AFFAIRS AND AGRICULTURAL PLANNING.

(OPT) THERE WILL ALSO BE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE VISITING DELEGATION LED BY PHILLIPPINES FOREIGN MINISTER CARLOS ROMULO TO MEET WITH TOP OFFICIALS IN THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, MEMBERS TO CONGRESS, AND AMERICAN BUSINESS LEADERS AND INDUSTRIALISTS.
(END OPT)

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